



**Morning Alert - Friday, September 23, 2016**

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## **HEADLINES**

### **Morning news**

NHK gave top play to a report that PM Abe has arrived in Cuba and met with former President Fidel Castro at his residence, saying that the premier is expected to meet with President Raul Castro later in the day to discuss ways to strengthen economic relations and call for Cuban cooperation in ratcheting up the pressure on North Korea. NTV led with a report that Yahoo announced that the personal information of about 500 million users was leaked in 2014. Other networks gave top play to updates on the soil and water problems at the new fish market in Toyosu.

Top stories in national dailies included a GOJ plan to make automatic lighting systems obligatory for new vehicles (Asahi); survey results showing that 30% of prefectural assemblies do not require assembly members to report on official overseas trips (Mainichi); a GOJ plan to make the return of two of the four Northern Territories islands a minimum condition for starting peace treaty talks with Russia (Yomiuri); the Health Ministry's support for the use of artificial intelligence to revolutionize drug development (Nikkei); and problems related to the construction of the new fish market in Toyosu (Sankei).

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Abe holds talks with Vice President Biden**

Yomiuri and Sankei front-paged reports on Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Vice President Biden on Wednesday at the UN headquarters in New York, during which the two confirmed close U.S.-Japan cooperation in responding to North Korea. Abe reiterated Japan's call on China to exercise restraint in the South and East China Seas, and Biden expressed deep concern over China's

activities there. The prime minister and the vice president also confirmed their nations' continued efforts to seek the early effectuation of the TPP agreement.

Mainichi wrote that Abe called for U.S. understanding for Russian President Putin's planned visit to Japan in December by telling the vice president that the Northern Territories issue can only be settled through talks between himself and Putin. Abe added that there has been no change in Japan's position of upholding G7 unity on sanctions on Russia over Ukraine. The paper quoted Biden as saying that he believes Abe will handle the issue prudently.

With regard to Futenma relocation, the premier told the vice president that there has been no change in Japan's position that Henoko is the only option and that progress has been made in the legal process for the Henoko project. Biden was quoted by Mainichi as expressing U.S. hopes to continue to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance.

### **Forming united front against North Korea appears difficult**

Friday's Asahi wrote that it remains to be seen whether the global community will be able to form a united coalition against the DPRK despite the fact that Prime Minister Abe stressed the need for international cooperation in adopting a new UN Security Council sanctions resolution during his speech and meetings with foreign leaders at the UN and President Obama called for China's cooperation at his meeting with Chinese Premier Li in New York. It is still unclear whether the UNSC will adopt a strong resolution against Pyongyang because China and Russia have been noncommittal on the matter.

### **Japan asks Iran to terminate military cooperation with North Korea**

Most Friday papers reported on Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Iranian President Rouhani on Wednesday in New York, during which Abe requested that Iran terminate its military cooperation with North Korea. Rouhani said in reply that the development of weapons of mass destruction will not lead to stability anywhere in the world and that Iran supports the denuclearization of North Korea. Nikkei added that Abe expressed his willingness to visit Iran in the future.

### **Abe meets with Turkish leader**

Several Friday papers reported on Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Turkish President Erdogan on Wednesday in New York, during which Abe expressed respect for the unity shown by the Turkish people after the failed military coup in July.

### **Kishida to visit to Russia in October**

Friday's Yomiuri front-paged a report on Foreign Minister Kishida's meeting with his Russian counterpart Lavrov on Wednesday in New York, during which the two officials agreed to step up preparations for a planned visit to Japan by President Putin in December. Kishida will visit Russia possibly in late October, and Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Shuvalov will visit Japan in

November or later to discuss bilateral economic cooperation. All other papers ran similar inside-page reports.

### **Philippine leader to visit Japan in October**

Most Friday papers wrote from Manila that arrangements are being made for Philippine President Duterte to visit Japan on October 25-27 for a summit with PM Abe. This will be the Philippine leader's first trip outside of ASEAN. Duterte is expected to confirm bilateral coordination on maritime security and call for Japanese business investment. Manila is also considering arranging a visit to China by President Duterte ahead of his trip to Japan.

### **Abe speaks briefly with Chinese Premier Li**

All Thursday papers wrote from New York that Prime Minister Abe held a brief conversation with Chinese Premier Li at the UN headquarters on Wednesday, during which Abe expressed hope for Li to visit to Japan this year for a tripartite summit with South Korea. In response to Abe's call for close coordination on North Korea, the Chinese official said Beijing is interested in enhancing cooperation with Tokyo on issues in Northeast Asia.

### **Japanese business leaders unable to meet with top Chinese officials**

Thursday's Asahi reported on a visit to China on Wednesday by a 200-member Japanese business delegation, noting that despite the visitors' request for a meeting with Premier Li or a person of similar status, they were greeted by the Chinese Communist Party's seventh-ranked official instead. The daily said this reflects the uneasy relations between Tokyo and Beijing.

### **Japan, UK to hold 2+2 next year**

Thursday's Yomiuri wrote that Foreign Minister Kishida and his British counterpart Johnson met in New York on Tuesday and agreed to convene a 2+2 foreign and defense ministerial meeting early next year with the goal of strengthening defense cooperation. Johnson pledged that London will make efforts to ensure that Japanese businesses will be able to continue to operate smoothly in the UK even after Brexit.

### **Abe pledges \$1.1 billion in aid for Syria and neighbors**

Thursday's Yomiuri reported from New York that PM Abe attended a Syria-related meeting held at the UN Security Council on Wednesday and pledged \$1.1 billion yen in aid for Syria, Iraq, and neighboring nations. The Japanese contribution will be used for food, water, education, and vocational training.

### **Inada holds talks with counterpart from Myanmar**

Thursday's Yomiuri wrote that Defense Minister Inada met with her visiting counterpart from Myanmar on Wednesday and affirmed that maritime and other international disputes should be resolved based on the "rule of law."

## **SECURITY**

### **U.S. Marine AV-8 Harrier crashes off Okinawa**

Friday's Mainichi, Sankei, and Tokyo Shimbun front-paged reports saying that a U.S. Marine AV-8 Harrier crashed at around 2 p.m. on Thursday in waters about 150 km east of Cape Hedo, which is located at the north end of the main island of Okinawa, after taking off from Kadena AB. The pilot ejected from the aircraft and was picked up by a U.S. military helicopter. The U.S. military is currently investigating the cause of the incident. Okinawa Governor Onaga issued a statement saying: "The incident is very regrettable because it will instill great fear among people in Okinawa who are forced to live next to U.S. military bases. We call on the U.S. military to suspend flights of Harrier jets until the cause of the incident becomes clear." The governor plans to make the same request to Defense Minister Inada when she visits Okinawa on Sept. 23-24. Other papers ran similar inside-page stories and all broadcasters reported on the incident on Thursday evening and Friday morning.

## **POLITICS**

### **JCP decides to seek cooperation with DP in next general election**

Thursday's Asahi wrote that the Japanese Communist Party decided on Wednesday that it will continue to cooperate with the Democratic Party and other opposition parties in the next election for the House of Representatives. The JCP may choose not to field candidates in the upcoming by-elections in Tokyo and Fukuoka in late October so as to defeat the LDP candidates by supporting those backed by the DP. The JCP may also forgo fielding candidates in most of the 295 single-seat districts in the next general election in order to support those of the DP and other opposition parties in the hope that the largest opposition party will choose not to field candidates in several constituencies in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Okinawa where the JCP has a solid support base.

In a related story, Asahi wrote that the DP is bracing for PM Abe to call a snap election in January, noting that the party's new Election Committee Chairman Mabuchi will be in charge of election cooperation with the JCP and other opposition parties.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Abe calls on U.S. to ratify TPP**

Thursday's Nikkei wrote that during a speech to U.S. businesspeople in New York on Wednesday, PM Abe pledged his administration's efforts to pass the TPP legislation in the upcoming Diet session and asked the U.S. to do the same. "I want the U.S. to ratify the TPP accord," he said. "American politicians need to persuade those who think it won't be beneficial [to the U.S.]"

